Tussen beroep en roeping

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Summary

Between a Living and a Calling.
The Academy between Art and State.

The first publicly funded art academy was established in 1563 in Florence. Artists and the state have a shared interest in the new academy. For artists, an accredited school marked an important leap forward in their efforts to break away from the existing guild system and to have art acknowledged as an autonomous profession. By facilitating an educational institution, the state hoped to gain the allegiance of the artists and use their work for representational purposes.

This study researches the history and current state of the art academy as an institution resulting from the forces at play between the academy, the state, and the arts. The starting point is the shifting discourse on art and artistic practices. As such, the main question of this study is: how is the value of art education understood, and what changes is this understanding subject to? The notion of Bildung, more specifically Schiller's concept of aesthetic Bildung, is the primary lens I use to examine the study of art. Already implicit in Vasari's ideas on art, from the late eighteenth century onwards the notion of Bildung gained currency in the discourse practiced by both the artists and the state.

In chapter 1, I discuss the circumstances leading up to the founding of the academy in Florence and how a century later the Académie Royale in Paris became the paragon of art education. In Italy, artists had been striving for a further professionalisation of their field and for higher social status for a considerable time. Ghiberti's, Alberti's, and Leonardo's theoretical work laid the theoretical foundations for this very endeavour. The artists' interests largely ran parallel to the desire of those in power for appealing images that could justify their position. It was for this reason that Cosimo I de' Medici allowed the establishment of the Accademia del Disegno. Additional factors also contributed to this development. The fascination with ancient languages and cultures gave rise to study groups that functioned as meeting places for scholars and artists. The emergence of mendicant orders led to the use of instructional and narrative imagery in religious teaching. In addition to drawing, the Accademia chiefly offered theoretical training. Artists distinguished

themselves from craftsmen by their intellectual knowledge. The competition between artists and guilds became political when the Paris academy acquired royal patronage from the French court. The Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture (1648) served two goals: to glorify the king's supreme power and to contribute to France's economic policy. At the Paris academy theoretical education took centre stage as well, focussing mainly on Bellori's classicist art theory. By the end of the seventeenth century a theoretical discussion unfolded, questioning to what degree strict rules ought to be followed in the arts. This discussion opened up new theoretical perspectives. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the number of art academies in Europe rapidly increased. The main reasons for this development were the greater importance assigned to education in general and the newly found economic benefits of art. The prevailing art philosophy – neoclassicism – reaffirmed the Paris academy's leading position.

Chapter 2 addresses the romantic art movement in Germany. The aim here is not to give a complete account of romantic art theory, but to clarify the concepts and ideas that have come to inform the discussion on art education since then. The chapter zooms in on the backdrop of the romantic revolt. How did the ideas of Heinse, Hamann, and Herder pave the way for the spiritual revolution of romanticism? Some of Kant's concepts are also addressed, as his aesthetics were key to the advancement of romantic theory. Successively, Schiller's main thoughts on art were discussed in Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen (1795). The objective of Schiller's aesthetic theory was twofold. Seeking to embed Kant's aesthetics historically and socially, he simultaneously aimed to define the aesthetic experience as a condition of freedom and self-determination. For Schiller, the aesthetic state was the epitome of humanity. Romantic theory developed in continuous discussion with Kant's and Schiller's aesthetic principles. Through the concepts of autonomy, expression, imagination, genius, and irony, the chapter elaborates the basics of romanticism.

In chapter 3, I discuss the developments of art education in the nineteenth century. As of then, the changing way in which artists have come to see themselves, as expressed in romantic theory, had not reached art education in practice. Representation and economic interests were still at the foundation of state-funded academies. However, romanticism certainly did reflect a change in the social realm. The modern artist was an exhibiting artist; he was a free agent on the art market. I illustrate romantic theory's limited effect on art education with the example of the Munich art academy. Increased social isolation and the exalted ideals of romantic art

theory led to the formation of groups. I zoom in on the Nazarenes, whose work, despite this group's resistance to romanticism, could nonetheless be wielded for the state's national interest.

The second half of the chapter provides an account of the developments within art education in France, the Netherlands, and England. In France, the strong classicist tradition and the exceptional alignment of private studios of prominent artists to the École des Beaux-Arts led to the preservation of the status quo. In the Netherlands, however, the emphasis was on the importance of drawing for its effect on the refinement of the people's taste and the improvement of industrial products. Art education intended to spur national art was unfamiliar to the Dutch art tradition. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that romantic ideals began taking form there. Even then they had only a minimal part to play. In England, the state's art education policy remained conservative. Initiatives to change art education came from artists formed by romanticism. John Ruskin and William Morris being the most influential ones among them.

Chapter 4 explores the significance and influence of the Bauhaus. For art and design education, the Bauhaus was the most prominent alternative to the Académie Royale in Paris. The Bauhaus aimed to train artists to engage with pressing societal issues in order to be capable of bringing about fundamental change. As such, the Bauhaus became associated with existing reform initiatives such as the Kunstschulreform momevent and experimental private art schools. Gropius wanted to bring together art, crafts, and mechanical technique in one programme. This endeavour could only be fruitful if Kultur ideals were followed. In addition to the psychological training of the students, the formation of an Arbeitsgemeinschaft was pivotal. Gropius' objective was twofold. The programme was designed to train artists to collaborate with others on production processes, as well as to give them a profound mental preparation which would serve to promote social transformation. Internal conflicts and political obstruction forced Gropius to move the institute to Dessau and make reforms. He eventually withdrew from the Bauhaus in 1927, and the institute changed course. A design programme for standardised production processes replaces the concept of an integrated art academy. The chapter's final paragraphs discuss the significance of the Bauhaus experiment and the example it set. The influence of former Bauhäusler in the United States is discussed, as well as the way its philosophy reverberated in East and West Germany after World War II.

In chapter 5, I give an account of the cultural and art educational policy in the Netherlands in the twentieth century. Before 1945, the Netherlands did

not provide state funding for the arts and as such did not exhibit any particular interest in art education either. Art and culture largely remained individual affairs. Art education – with the exception of the Rijksakademie – was regarded as vocational, concerned with practical skills and industry rather than with culture. The Bauhaus experiment found little response in Dutch art education. However, in 1945 the government initiated an active arts and culture policy, which had consequences for art education too. A thirst for artistic renewal was felt among young artists, and the romantic notions and other processes described in earlier chapters came into play. This raised the question of whether art education should be granted a special status. The main issue in all art policy reports published since 1950 was how the state legitimises its art policy. On what basis could the government justify collective support for the arts? And how did this affect the social significance of art education? In the early 1980s, the art policy was revised, marking the beginning of far-reaching reforms in the system of art education. The report 'Beroep Kunstenaar', published in 1999, would set the norm for the government's future policy. From then on, the debate on art and art practices would be shaped by economic terminology.

In chapter 6, I discuss the reorganisation of art education from the early twenty-first century onwards, and the new tension emerging between art practices, the state, and the academy. The central question in this chapter is whether the ideals related to the notion of Bildung are still relevant. Neoliberal thought and the Bologna Process have shifted the context in which the discussion on art education takes place. The notion of creativity is key here, and I link it to art practices, government policy and art education. In art, the dividing lines between disciplines are fading. Artists seek collaboration outside the artistic domain. As a result, hybrid artistic practices are emerging. The government remains primarily concerned with the economic benefits of art. Economic language shapes the thinking on the subject of art education, with the notion of the 'creative industry' at its core. In educational programmes, artistic research sparks particular interest. In what way can practice-based research broaden our understanding of reality? Taking into account all these developments from the past decades, the question arises of whether the notion of Bildung still holds any significance. The answer to this question is found through the thinking of Schiller and Rancière. I point out that Rancière takes up important thoughts from Schiller, while diverging from his perspective on essential points. According to Rancière, art articulates a struggle that needs to be followed through in an undying pursuit of emancipation.